

When a Christian Suffers Persecution - Part 4 - Acts 24:18-21 – February 7th, 2010

- This is part four of a series titled; "When a Christian Suffers Persecution," as we've studied how Paul is persecuted on trial for his faith.

1. Be courageous (Verse 1)

- Even though he's faced with a powerful prosecution against him, Paul is courageous because of the promise the Lord made to him.

2. Be genuine (Verses 2-4)

- Tertullus, the prosecuting attorney, makes his opening arguments and is as flattering as he is disingenuous towards the Governor Felix.

3. Be truthful (Verses 5-9)

- Absolutely nothing they say about Paul is true and in fact every charge against him is a blatant lie and false accusation based on rumor.

4. Be respectful (Verse 10)

- When Paul speaks to Felix, there is no flattery or insincerity however there is respect. Paul respects the office of governor, not the man.

5. Be prudent (Verses 11-13)

- Paul very prudently argues his case in how he presents the evidence as facts. He's as shrewd as a snake but harmless as a dove.

6. Be scriptural (Verses 14-16)

- Paul declares that he's a believer in the Hebrew scripture, a follower of Jesus and a preacher of Christ, Him crucified then resurrected.

7. Be benevolent (Verse 17)

- Paul tells Felix that his motive for coming to Jerusalem in the first place was to bring financial benevolence for the impoverished church.

8. Be confident (Verses 18-19)

18 I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. 19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me.

- v18 Paul says he was ceremonially clean when his accusers found him in the temple courts, and he wasn't involved in any disturbance.

- v19 He very confidently states that the prosecution has failed miserably in having some Jews there with any evidence against him.

- What's Paul doing here? He is displaying a tremendous confidence, not in himself, but in His Lord Whom he knows is his defense.

"This was a strong point in his defense: the people who had raised the hue and cry in the first instance, claiming to be eyewitnesses of his alleged sacrilege, had not troubled to be present." F.F. Bruce

Another commentator wrote; "Christians should never be timid about or ashamed of the truth, or of the evidence. If we are truly following God, the truth and evidence are our friends, not our accusers."

Proverbs 3:26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. KJV

Psalms 35:22-25 22 O LORD, you have seen this; be not silent. Do not be far from me, O Lord. 23 Awake, and rise to my defense! Contend for me, my God and Lord. 24 Vindicate me in your righteousness, O LORD my God; do not let them gloat over me. 25 Do not let them think, "Aha, just what we wanted!" or say, "We have swallowed him up." NIV

9. Be bold (Verses 20-21)

20 Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin- 21 unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'

- v20 Paul boldly declares that his accusers should state what crime they found him committing when he stood trial before the Sanhedrin.

- v21 then says the only reason he's on trial now is because he boldly shouted out his belief concerning the resurrection of the dead.

- Aren't boldness and confidence the same? Confidence is more inward and boldness more outward, because of the inward confidence.

- We see this demonstrated here because Paul's confidence in the Lord inwardly, enables him to make this bold statement outwardly.

- What's Paul saying, and why is he saying it in this way? Because believing in the resurrection of the wicked and righteous isn't a crime.

One wrote; "What then was his crime? That he believed in the resurrection? What sort of a crime was that? It was no crime at all."

- If you really think about it, the reason for Paul's inward confidence and outward boldness is because of his righteousness in Christ.

- When we find ourselves the recipient of unjust treatment, difficulty or persecution, we can be as bold as a lion in Christ's righteousness.

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. NIV